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A Case of Hypocrisy: The Detractors of Lynette Gay

A Statement by Luca Volontè, CEO Novae Terrae Foundation and former MP, Italy

[Salt Lake City, Utah, USA] Luca Volontè, a former member of the Italian Parliament and board member of the World Congress of Families released the following statement:

After declaring its decision to award an honorary degree to notable philanthropist and humanitarian Lynette Nielsen Gay, the University of Utah was fiercely criticized by LGBT groups who objected to her association with human dignity and family organizations, including her service on the board of directors of the World Congress of Families—an organization pledged to affirm and defend the sanctity of dignity of every human life according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Cowing to that criticism, the University chose to remove from the online bio it had posted for her all references to those family organizations, occasioning an even larger protest that the University was now trying to hide her association with “hate” groups (see <http://www.sltrib.com/news/3827168-155/university-of-utah-removes-references-to>).

I know well the motives and operations of the World Congress of Families, on whose board I also serve. I am also the founder of Nova Terrae in Italy, and have served as a member of the Italian parliament and the Council of Europe. From my experience, the reasons why Lynette Gay has been attacked by the LGBT community are inconceivable. The double standard used by the attackers who claim to be promoting human rights is troubling indeed.

Any demand by LGBT groups to silence and censor in advance anyone with different opinions and values is an egregious violation of the very principle they claim to uphold: tolerance. LGBT organizations demand for themselves full freedom from non-discrimination while they themselves wrongly discriminate by seeking to censor anyone who happens to think and act in a different way from them.

What LGBT organizations demand is highly distorted. On one hand, they demand privileges for themselves; on the other hand, they seek to suppress freedom of expression of all dissenters, especially those who care about fundamental human and citizenship rights—in stark violation of that right of freedom of conscience as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a multitude of other human rights documents. Any mention by LGBT groups of the human dignity of every person is hypocritical. The insults hurled at the life and work of a great humanitarian like Lynette Gay are built on prejudice and lies.

The incredible comparison by LGBT groups of the World Congress of Families with the KKK reveals two things. First, those making the comparison have not taken the time, or have been willing to take the time, to become acquainted with the actual positive and proactive work of the World Congress of Families, preferring instead to blindly accept the unfounded accusations made by others.

Second, as has become apparent in the controversy over Lynette Gay, LGBT organizations use the methods employed by every totalitarian regime in history: insults, slurs, and lies, all designed to destroy the credibility of their target. They lie consciously and their goal is to discriminate, punish,

ensor. It is a sad irony but true: the LGBT associations claiming to stand for non-discrimination have actually discriminated against Lynette Gay. History, especially my own European history, is replete with examples of self-proclaimed “tolerant” regimes forcibly and violently eliminating all dissent, and sometimes all dissenters.

Regretfully, by choosing to censor part of Lynette Gay’s biographical references, the University of Utah censored itself and contradicted its own values. The situation would be laughable if it weren’t so serious. It is the first time I know of that an institution has removed selected references from a biography of a person scheduled for an award for her philanthropic work. For now, the issue in question is about Lynette Gay’s association with pro-family groups, but what will it be in the future? Her place of birth, a book she may have published, or her political or religious affiliation? And who will handle the eraser? Who will choose what to remove and according to which principles and preferences?

A university should stand above such pettiness. It should be completely different, a place for open debate. The basic premise of the founding fathers of medieval universities—men like Humbolt, Newman, Jaspers, Heidgger, Weber, Bloch, Habermas—was reiterated by Edith Stein when she insisted that a university lifts every person in a global way, helping to avoid superficiality and rhetoric.

The University of Utah chose an obsessive political correctness in order to avoid dissent or disapproval. This kind of selective censorship is entirely different from a reasonable accommodation. The University of Utah has now handed LGBT organizations the right to veto, placing truth and lies on the same level. The case of Lynette Gay shows the most hypocritical intolerance and demand for a homogenization that blindly tramples any democratic value, right, and freedom.

To avoid any misunderstanding of her motives or work, Lynette Gay has decided to resign from the board of the World Congress of Families in order to avoid as much as possible any interference with her amazing humanitarian accomplishments throughout the world. I respect her decision. At the same time, I am reminded of the words of Vaclav Havel in his book *The Power of the Powerless*: “Until the appearance is confronted with reality, it does not seem an appearance; as long as life in a lie is not faced with life in the truth, it is missing a benchmark that proves the falseness.”

Let’s celebrate the award to Lynette Nielsen Gay for a life of dedicated service to others, the truth, and the common good. And let’s beware the insidious intolerance imposed by those whose avowed claim is tolerance for all.

Mr. Volontè is the CEO of the Novae Terrae Foundation, Chair of Dignitatis Humanae Institute, and member of the Board of Trustees of CitizenGo, ICLN, World Congress of Families, and Political Network for Values. He has been a member of the Italian Parliament for eighteen years and president of EPP-Christian Democratic Group at Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe since 2013.